

S E R M O N

Preached upon

Psalm 22, the former part of the first Verse.

W H E R E I N

Is shewed, how, when and wherefore
God doth desert his Children,

Unto which is also Annexed, certain Symptomes
Of a Deserted Condition; with Directions unto those
who have lost God's favour, how to get it; and directions
likewise unto those who have gotten God's Fa-
vour, how to keep it.

By T. P.

Matt. 27. 46.

Περὶ ᾧ ὁ ἐν ἀπώδω ὄρεαν ἀνεβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, λέγων· Ἡλὶ,
Ἡλὶ, λαμὰ σαβαχθανὶ, τὸτ' ἐστὶ, Θεέ μου, Θεέ μου, ἵνα τί με ἐγκατέλιπες.

Printed in the Year 1674.

3 E R M O N

Preached upon

John 22, the former part of the fifth Gospel

in the year 1711
in the year 1711, when and wherefore
the Lord was so much glorified

in the year 1711, when and wherefore
the Lord was so much glorified
in the year 1711, when and wherefore
the Lord was so much glorified

By T. P.

Printed in the Year 1714

Printed in the Year 1714

To my much Honoured and Esteemed
Friend, Mr. Joseph Holden of London
Gent.

Worthy Sir,

Since God (by divine Providence) has been pleased to exercise me, with many strange unparallel'd afflictions, which you (above all) have been privy too; and since your Favour and unmerited kindness (both as to external and internal things) hath been so frequently and bountifully vouchsafed to me in my deplorable condition. I thought myself obliged to offer up the first Fruits of my Laborious Studies to your Patronage; humbly begging your Acceptance thereof: The ensuing work has been delivered (verbatim) in a Publique Auditory, in London; it treats of Spiritual Desertions, with which I myself have been greatly exercised, so that what comes to the view of your Candid Eye, has been Operated and wrought by my own Experiences, and consequentially not so fully Fraught with Rhetorical Expressions. I might indeed have drest it in a more curious Garb, but that I affect plainness; only desiring it may be effectual for a publick Good: But however, my tender years (I hope) will Appologize for the homely Style and confused matter, and though it be so rag'd and unhandsome a Flower, yet if any can but suck sweetness and Spiritual benefit therefrom, my desire is accomplish'd. But lest I should exceed the limits of an Epistle, I only beg your continued Favour, and Subscribe my Self,

Your much Obliged Friend

and Servant in the Work of

the Lord, T. Powel.



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My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.



His Book of the Psalms receives its name from (*Psallere*) which signifies to sing; being stiled by the Ancients, to be a Sollolequie: because it is as it were a discourse managed and carried on between God and the Soul: St. *Chrysost.* calls it the Bed of Roses, because a Saint by Divine

Meditation doth receive a fragrant scent from thence, its likewise called (*parva Biblia*) because in a brief manner, there is contain'd in it as in a Bible, *viz.* Hystory, Law and Promises. Concerning this Book of the Psalmes, there are many divisions, some calls them Hymns, some call them Psalms, some divides them into five Books, some divides them into these following Sections, *viz.* 1. Prayers, 2. Thanksgivings, 3. Consolations, 4. Prophecies, 5. Doctrines.

First, all those Psalms are called Prayers, wherein any thing is desired or petitioned of God, as (*Miserere mei Deus*) O God have mercy on me, and as (*Ne in furore arguas me*) Do not rebuke me in thy hot displeasure. Secondly, all those Psalms are called Thanksgivings, wherein we do return thanks unto God for any benefit received, as (*Benedicite*) Bless ye the Lord. Thirdly, all those Psalms are called Consolations, wherein we do find words to this effect, (*Beati quorum remissa sunt iniquitates*) Blessed are those whose iniquities are pardoned and forgiven. Fourthly, all those Psalms are called Prophecies, wherein the Messiah is foretold and described. Fifthly, all those Psalms are called Doctrines, wherein precepts and directions are lay'd down.

The use of a Psalm is manifold, there are five especial times when Psalms are fit, meet, and suitable to be sung.

The first is, when thy Heart acheth, Psalms they are a holy

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preservative against the aching of the Heart, when thy Heart aches, sing a Psalm, and how will it raise thy Spirits.

Secondly, When thou art destitute of humane help, how many Psalms mayst thou find that shall come near thy Case in that same thing, viz. thy being destitute of humane help.

Thirdly, When thou art suppressed by any Enemy, whether Forrein or Domestical, External or Internal.

Fourthly, When thou art banish'd and debarr'd from thy Friends.

Fifthly, When thou art deposed out of that Office where God in God has been pleas'd to place thee, all these Estates, Conditions and cases, *David's* Psalms doth suite mighty well, and thus much for the Introductory part.

Now this Psalm which I have pitched upon doth in a more particular manner differ from the rest, in regard that the Literal significations of most Psalms are applicable to *David*, and the Allegorical signification is applicable to Christ, but this not only by an Allegory is applicable to Christ, but likewise by the Literal sence evidenced from the 8. 16. 26. Ver. of the same. The words therefore which I have pitched upon, being, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* are some of those last words which were used by our Saviour a little before he gave up the Ghost on the Cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, which in English is, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

I shall not trouble you with those various glosses upon this Text of Scripture, and therefore I shall only pitch upon that construction which Ancients have given upon it, and which is now approv'd by Modern Writers, viz. That *David* or our Saviour, did not speak these words only or altogether in their own persons, but in the persons of All mankind: the latter of which Interpretation I intend to make the Subject matter of

our Discourse at this time. In the words then you may observe these two parts considerable, 1. An affectionate complaint in these words, *My God, my God*, 2. an Anxious Expostulation, *why hast thou forsaken me?* in which divisions you may observe David's distress, being in a desertion implied in this expostulation, or Interrogation, *why hast thou forsaken me?*

Secondly, you may observe David's Faith, that though in a desertion, yet God was his God still, He doth not cry out, *O God, O God, why hast thou forsaken me*, But, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* not as we, when many times in a desertion, cryeth out, *God is not my God*, for the which he might justly depart from us totally and finally.

The words are so copious, that Ten Sermons might be more excellently Preached upon them than one; but to square things according to time and strength, I shall only give you this proposition, or Doctr. viz. That,

Though God may sometimes desert a Believer, yet he remains the Believers God still.

Now in the carrying on of this, I shall do these several things.

1. I shall shew when a Soul may be said to be in a deserted condition.

2. I shall shew you those times and seasons that God most usually deserts a Soul in.

3. I shall prove the point.

4. I shall shew you those designs that God doth propound to himself in the deserting of his Children.

5. I shall close with the Application.

First of all I am to shew when a Soul may be said to be in a deserted condition, and,

First of all thou mayst be said to be in a deserted condition, when there is an intermission of thy Communion with God: desertion is nothing else but an intermission of our Communion with God. When thou canst not commune with God as heretofore, then it is a signe there is some distance between God and thy Soul, when that blessed intercourse (I say) which was or otheretofore between God and thy Soul, is now obstructed, then

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it is a signe that God hath received some offence from thee, and so is become prejudiced through thy perverse unseemling, and ungospel like walking towards him.

Secondly, when thou dost desist from waiting upon God, in the use of means, then thou mayst be said to be in a deserted condition, when the Ordinances of the Gospel which once were pleasant to thee, are now but indifferent, then it argues bad; when a man is sick, there are certain Symptomes by which it may be discovered and made known, viz. His Looks are metamorphosed, Pulses beat, and Appetite lost; even so it is with a Sin-sick Soul, with a Deserted Soul, who may be known by those certain Symptoms afore hinted, viz. she has not that Stomach as heretofore, once she hungred after the means of Grace, but now she is even surfeited with the plentifulness of it, her former Appetite she has lost.

Thirdly, when thy Faith touching God, thy Soul, and future Estate is not so clear as heretofore, then thou mayst be said to be in a deserted condition. Once thou didst believe that God was thy God, but now thou art at a stand, & dost not know what to think of it, thou thought'st that thy Soul once was in a good estate, but now thou begins to question it; once if one had asked thee a question concerning thy future estate, thou couldst have given them a full and perfect answer; but now such a question would puzzle thee: Thus I say a Soul when in a deserted condition, is at infinite uncertainties touching her future estate.

Fourthly, when thy Graces are rather decreased than increased, then it is a sign that thou art in a deserted condition where a decay of Grace is, there the absence of the especial presence of God is presupposed, when we grow rather downwards in our Graces than upwards; it doth Prognosticate not only a Desertion to come, but a desertion even now, as Success and Prosperity is the effect of God's Presents, so desertion and distress is the effects of God's absence.

Fifthly

Fifthly, When thy fear is greater than thy Faith, then thou maist be said to be in a deserted condition, as for instance, when thou art so staggering in thy Faith, as that thou art loath to rely upon, trust in, and adhere to Christ for Salvation, though the grounds of thy Faith are firm and substantial enough, when thy fear (I say) doth usurp that Authority which Faith alone doth claim, then thy condition is very suspicious.

I come now to the second thing propos'd, which is, to shew those Times and Seasons that God most usually deserts a Soul in.

And first of all when God deserts, he deserts in the time of Prosperity, because then we are mighty apt to grow high, and lofty, and to aspire unto things that are so sublime as are beyond our Sphere and Orb, for the which God doth oft-times desert u.

Secondly, in a time of security, when we are apt to be so secure in ourselves, then God departs from us, to the end that he might shake off our security.

Thirdly, in a time of murmuring, when we quarrel with God's providences, and are angry with him upon no other Account, but because he doth not humour us, and do what we would have him to do.

I come now to the third thing propos'd, viz. the proof of the point, namely, that though God may desert a Believer, yet he remains the believers God still; and herein, I shall be brief, lest I be prevented, in that which yet lags behind: And first of all the proof is evidenced in the Text, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Here a desertion is intimated; but still God continues in the relation of a Father to the Soul; see that excellent place of Scripture

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for the further confirmation of this, *Rom. 8. 38. John 10. 28.* The Sacred Writ doth infinitely abound with Scriptures of this kind.

Secondly, God hath entred into a Covenant of Life with a Believer, *Jer. 31. 31.* Therefore though the Lord doth desert, it is only for a time, the Lord will not cast off for ever, saith the Church in *Jeremiah's* time, the *Lamentations of Jeremiah 3. 31.*

Thirdly, Those Obligations which are injoned on God and the Soul, are not temporary, but in *eternum*, that is, for ever. As soon as ever conjugal affections are contracted between God and the Soul, in *eternum durabit*, it lasts for ever. But to conclude with this particular, further consider, God is alwayes the Believers God.

First, Because the Father in Election is Infallible.

2. The Son in his Redemption shall not be frustrated.

3. The Spirit in Application of the benefits of Christ's Passion is irresistible, and unchangeable.

4. Because the Regeneration of God's people is perpetual.

5. Because that power by which God's people is upheld, is invincible and unconquerable.

I come now unto the fourth thing proposed, which is, to shew what are those ends and designs that God propounds unto himself in the deserting of a Soul.

And the first is, *Probandi gratia*, for tryal sake: God many times deserts us and leaves us, to the end, that he might know how strong our Faith is, how unfeigned our Love is, or inflamed our desires are, and how hot our Zeal is, for him and to him; God oft-times deales with us as the Mother doth with her Child, in running away from it, to know whether the child is fond of her, and whether it will run after her.

Secondly,

Secondly, God deserts us *abstinendi gratia*, and leaves us, to the end, that we might leave our sins, for while we regard iniquity, God will not love us, neither will he dwell with us; God is a holy God, and cannot see sin, with approbation and allowance in any of his creatures. From hence you may observe, what is the great proposition of the Covenant of Grace, which is, either take God and leave sin, or leave God and take sin; many times we are apt to grow in love with our sins, therefore God departs from us, to see which we like best, he, or sin.

Thirdly, God sometimes deserts us and leaves us (*estimandi gratia*) that we may prize him the more when he comes to us again. The Presents of a Friend that has been absent a great while, how welcome is it? even after this manner it is between God and us, when we have not seen his face a great while, how sweet then is his reconciled face unto us? Oh! Poor soul, the great reason why God stays so long from thee, is, that thou might'st prize him the more when he comes again unto thee.

Fourthly, God many times leaves us and deserts us (*cauendi gratia*) to the end we might have a care of losing him again. The burnt child (*ut vulgo dicitur*) dreads the fire; so that man or woman, who knows how bitter the absence of God is, will take care another time how they forfeit their communion with him.

Fifthly, God many times leaves us and deserts us (*antici-
pandi gratia*) to prevent our affections from being glewed to things here below; God many times leaves us (I say) lest we should like our being here below too well. If our communion with God was continual, it would be a Heaven then upon Earth, if God's presence was alwayes with us, we should not talk then of going to Heaven: we should even say as Peter did unto Christ in the transfiguration, *Lord it is good for us* (saith he) *to be here*, Matt. 17 4.

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Application.

I come now unto the Application, is it so, that though God may desert a Believer, yet he is the Believers God still: then this may serve for a use of comfort and consolation to you that are in a deserted condition, though he has left you, yet he is your God still; though he has left you, yet he will come to you again. O drooping Soul bear up then, have a good Heart, though a deserted Soul yet a happy Soul.

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Secondly, if so be this is a truth, then it will serve to refuse and confute such who do hold that one may be a child of God to day, and a child of the Devil tomorrow; whereas we deny it and affirm thus, once a Believer, and alwayes a Believer, once a child of God and alwayes a child of God: if God hath been really our God, he is our God for ever.

Use 3.

If so be this is a Truth, then here is encouragement for you, to go to God in your forlorn Estate, though he hath deserted you, yet know he hath not utterly cast you off; seeing then that he is your God, gather from thence ground enough sufficient not to drive you into despair. He is your God (I say) therefore go to him and beg earnestly of him for deliverance: Cry out as our Lord Jesus did upon the Cross, *My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?* Argue it with God, reason the case (I say) with God; let thy Soul Expollulate with God, after this manner. Lord I am thine and thou art mine, why therefore should there be such difference between thee and my Soul, pray to God believingly
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wrestle with him in good earnest, argue with him to some purpose, until such time thou hast prevailed with him, and hast gotten the blessing.

Having now almost brought my Discourse to a Period, I shall only lay down a few directions to those who have lost God's favour, how to get it, secondly to those who have gotten God's favour how to keep it.

First I am to lay down some directions to those who have lost God's favour, how to get it, and first be earnest in the persuite after it; if you have lost God's favour, give neither slumber to your Eye-lids, or rest to your soules until such times you get it, because as the best White wine, when stale, becom's to be the sowrest Vinegar, so likewise, the best love when abused, turns to be the sorest wrath.

Secondly, you must endeavour after God's favour by pleading the Promises, when thou goest to God in a way of Duty, say unto him, Lord, thou hast promised such and such things, therefore I am resolved in the strength of Christ not to go away till these Promises are fulfilled in me.

Thirdly to get God's favour, is by weeping, lamenting, and repenting over that which has been the occasion of losing it. Physicians reckon that when they have found out the cause of the Distemper, the cure is half done. So soul when thou knowest what that particular thing is for, which God hath departed from thee, then there is hopes; O therefore loath thy self, cry shame of thy self, in regard of carrying thy self so frowardly and disobediently unto God who hath been so good unto thee.

I come now to give some directions unto those who have gotten God's Favour, how to keep it.

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And first of all be sure you prize it: value you it at a high rate, you that have gotten God's Favour are rich indeed; nay further, if you have gotten God's favour, you have gotten that which a Thousand Worlds can't purchase.

Secondly, if thou wouldst keep God's favour, endeavour to live answerable unto it; have a care of sinning away God's favour, make a good use of it, grace the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, with a pure and blameless conversation. The way to get mercies continued, is by getting them Sanctified.

Thirdly, if thou wouldst keep God's favour, wait then upon him in a conscientious use of means; pray more sincerely than heretofore, pray more ardently than heretofore, pray more believingly than heretofore, pray more perseveringly than heretofore: So in like manner, when thou comest to the Sacrament, let thy love be unfeigned, thy Faith increased, thy Repentance renewed; be frequent, I say, in the use of those means which God hath appointed for the increase of our graces, so as that you may live like a people that have a Hell to escape, and a Heaven to obtain.

Fourthly, to keep God's favour, is by considering that if thou lovest it, thou wilt thereby lose thy soul; if God's Favour is kept, thy salvation is sure, but if God's favour is lost then thy salvation is lost.

Fifthly and lastly, to keep God's favour is by believing that it is the principal thing in Heaven and Earth, which indeed it is, what will it profit you, if you should gain the whole world and lose God's favour: is there any thing here below that can do you good in another World, besides the favour of God?

Money will buy (*ut alii dicunt*) all things but not the favour of God.

Finally

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Finally, (my brethren) there is nothing to be compared with it, Oh then! what now doth remain, but that you should so prize it, the favour of God is an excellent thing, do you so account it; which that you may so do, the Lord God say *Amen.*

Laus Deo.

(12)
 Finally, (my brethren) there is nothing to be compared
 with it. On the one hand, as now doth remain, but that you should
 to prize it, the favour of God is an excellent thing, do you to
 account it: which that you may do, the Lord God say
 Amen

Thus Done

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